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AUTHOR Thomas, Hollie B.
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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the effect of social class, race, and sex on the work values of ninth-grade students in a large metropolitan area. Measures of work values were obtained using Super's (1970) Work Values Inventory. Results indicated that race and sex have differential effects on the development of work values. Significant differences between black and white students appeared for the variables of associates, altruism, variety, and intellectual stimulation. Males and females varied on creativity and altruism. Where signficant differences appeared between blacks and whites, white students in all cases expressed greater value for each of the work value constructs. In general, black females of low social position scored low on the work values scales. (Author/RS)

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The Effects of Social Position, Race, and Sex on Work Values of Ninth Grade Students*

Hollie B. Thomas
University of Illinois

Should work values, the goals that motivate man to work, be taught to the unemployed and the potentially unemployed or should these values instead be used to form a basis for occupational counseling? This question has caused much discussion among educators, but very little conclusive research has been generated as a result. Perhaps the lack of conclusive research is because the question is one of philosophy rather than of practice. Shappell et al.(1971) noted that the trait and factor theory provides the underlying principles for most vocational guidance planning and practices. In practice the best inventories available for vocational guidance are selected and administered to the population identified. Sessions are held to interpret and discuss inventory results. However, this procedure appears to ignore the variability of the student's environment (Shappell et al. 1971), and the student's perceptions of his environment.

As a result, a counselor or teacher may not consider an individual student's particular situation when interpreting his scores to him. On the other hand, such test scores are usually reflective of the student's environment, for work values have been found to have a weak, but consistent, relationship with such factors as family status, sex, and age (e.g., Zytowski, 1970).

Work values appear to develop long before most career education and counseling programs are started in the schools. Hales and Fenner (1972) found that values relating to work were well developed by the fifth grade. Fifth and eighth grade students differed only slightly from eleventh grade students. Of the ten scale

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variables studied, only altruism and self-actualization were valued less by the younger students. Gribbons and Lohnes (1965) found values relating to work relatively stable during the years between fifth and eleventh grades, with students of both sexes showing a decrease in their value for preparation, ability, and advancement.

Although work values are formed early, and apparently do not change significantly between the late elementary and high school years, sex differences are evident. For example, girls were found to value occupations that involved social service (e.g., Wagman, 1965; Singer and Stefflre, 1954; Gribbons and Lohnes, 1965; and Wolfe, 1969). Males placed higher value on salary and prestige (e.g., Gribbons and Lohnes, 1965; Wagman, 1965). Singer and Stefflre (1954) found that males placed higher value on power and independence, while Shappell et al. (1971) found that males valued risk, aspiration, esteem, and object orientation in their work roles. Girls appear to value the extrinsic rewards of work less than boys (e.g., Wolfe, 1969).

The social position of parents is also related to work values held by the students (e.g., Ermalinski and Ruscelli, 1971). Stefflre (1959) found that students whose fathers were white collar workers placed more importance on the work values of altruism and control (the extent to which he values work where he is the "boss") in contrast to students whose fathers were blue collar workers who placed more value on security and money.

Although race appears to be related to work values (e.g., Wasserman, 1971), in studies identified which used work values as variables, race was confounded with social class, or had other methodological problems. For example, the study

by Shappell et al. (1971) compared inner city black students from lower socio-economic classes with white middle class suburban students. Findings in this study indicated that girls in an inner city school differed significantly from girls in a suburban school on fifteen Hall Occupational Orientation Inventory scales. Seven mean scores for the same inventory showed significant differences between the inner city and suburban males. Differences were attributed to area of residence, even though racial and socioeconomic differences were also present.

The present study seeks to eliminate some of the methodological problems of the previous studies, and will consider the independent variables of race, sex, and social position concurrently.

Objectives.

The primary objective of the present study was to determine the effect of social position, race, and sex on the work values of ninth grade students in a large metropolitan area. More specifically stated, the objective was to determine whether there were significant differences in the mean scores on the Work Values Inventory (WVI) Scales (Super, 1970; Hendrix and Super, 1968), between students from low and high socioeconomic status families; between black and white students, and between male and female students. Interactions among these factors were also explored.

Methods.

The population consisted of ninth grade students from a suburban area of a large metropolitan city. A sample was obtained by randomly ordering the schools in the study area and contacting them in order until four cooperating schools were obtained. It was necessary to contact five schcols to obtain the cooperation of

four. A random sample of approximately 60 students was obtained from each school. The instruments were administered during school hours, thus assuring participation of those selected.

Factorial analysis of variance (Winer, 1962) was used to obtain the main effects of social class, race, and sex as well as all possible interactions. The Newman-Kuels technique for multiple comparisons (Winer, 1962) was employed where significant interactions were observed. Multiple comparisons were not necessary for the main effects since each had only two levels.

Data Source.

The instrument employed in this study was Super's (1970) Work Values Inventory which was developed as a wide-range values inventory to assess the goals which motivate man, including values which are both extrinsic to as well as intrinsic in work. Values assessed include Creativity, Management, Achievement, Surroundings, Supervisory Relations, Way of Life, Security, Associates, Esthetics, Prestige, Independence, Variety, Economic Return, Altruism, and Intellectual Stimulation. Data concerning race, sex and socioeconomic status were also obtained, the latter through use of Hollingshead's scale (1958). Families whose head held a job at the sixth or higher level were considered to be low socioeconomic families.

Results.

The main effect of the social position of the family, race, and sex presented in Table 1, were significant for one or more of the fifteen variables. As shown in Tables 2 and 3 significant interactions were obtained for sex x social position and race x social position. Significant differences between means of the black and white students were observed for the variables of Associates ($p < .01$), Altruism

TABLE 1

Work Value Inventory Means by Sex, Race, and Social Position

	Sex			Race			Social Position		
WVI Scale	Male	Female	Significance of Main Effect	Black	White	Significance of Main Effect	Low	High	Significance of Main Effect
Creativity	11.02	12.13	.01	11.22	11.93	N.S.	11.68	11.47	N.S.
Management	9.80	9.30	N.S.	9.68	9.43	N.S.	9.68	9.42	N.S.
Achievement	11.59	12.08	N.S.	11.57	12.11	N.S.	11.91	11.77	N.S.
Surroundings	11.49	11.82	N.S.	11.40	11.91	N.S.	11.71	11.60	N.S.
Supervisory Relations	11.66	12.01	N.S.	11.75	11.93	N.S.	12.01	11.66	N.S.
Way of Life	12.59	13.13	N.S.	12.70	13.01	N.S.	12.60	13.11	N.S.
Security	12.30	12.64	N.S.	12.57	12.37	N.S.	12.35	12.59	N.S.
Associates	10.37	10.59	N.S.	9.91	11.05	.01	10.43	10.53	N.S.
Esthetics	9.10	10.01	N.S.	9.39	9.72	N.S.	9.86	9.25	N.S.
Prestige	10.54	10.51	N.S.	10.35	10.71	N.S.	10.19	10.87	N.S.
Independence	11.37	11.79	N.S.	11.51	11.65	N.S.	11.42	11.75	N.S.
Variety	9.83	10.30	N.S.	9.41	10.71	.01	9.97	10.16	N.S.
Economic Returns	12.67	12.13	N.S.	12.47	12.31	N.S.	12.15	12.64	N.S.
Altruism	10.99	12.34	.01	11.08	12.25	.01	11.24	12.10	.05
Intellectual Stimulation	10.58	11.14	N.S.	10.31	11.41	.01	10.81	10.91	N.S.

TABLE 2

Marginal Means for WVI Variables with Significant Sex X Social Position Interactions

	Male		Female	
WVI Scale	Low Social Position	High Social Position	Low Social Position	High Social Position
Achievement	12.32	10.87	11.50	12.66
Prestige	10.72	10.36	9.65	11.36
Variety	10.33	9.32	9.61	11.00

TABLE 3

Marginal Means for WVI Variables with Significant Race X Social Position Interactions

	Black		White	
WVI Scale	Low Social Position	High Social Position	Low Social Position	High Social Position
Security	11.86	13.26	12.83	11.91
Associates	9.43	10.39	11.43	10.66

($p < .01$), Variety ($p < .01$), and Intellectual Stimulation ($p < .01$). Means of male and female students were significantly different for the variables of Creativity ($p < .01$) and Altruism ($p < .01$). The means on Social Position were significantly different for the Altruism value ($p < .05$). Where significant differences occurred between black and white students, the white students in all cases expressed a greater value for each of the work value constructs. Female students held significantly higher work values than male students for both the Creativity and Altruism variables. High social position students held significantly higher values concerning Altruism than low social position students.

The interaction between race and social position indicates that race and social position have differential effects on the work value development. Significant interactions ($p < .05$) between race and social position occurred for Security and Associates variables. Here the low social position black placed significantly less importance on the values of Associates, than the low social position white, while high social position black students placed significantly more value on security than low social position black students. Significant interaction effects ($p < .05$) were obtained for sex x social position for Achievement, Prestige, and Variety variables. Therefore, an attempt was made to find out what significant differences existed between marginal means of sex and social position. Post hoc test results showed that high social position females placed significantly more value on Achievement than low social position females and high social position males. In addition, low social position males valued this work value significantly more than high social position males. When the sex x social interaction was probed for the Prestige variable, it was found that high social position females placed

significantly more emphasis on this value than low social position females. High social position females valued variety significantly more than high social position males and low social position females.

In general, low social position black females placed low value on the various work values. Investigation of the cell means revealed that the low social position black females had low mean scores for each of these variables while high social black females placed high value on the various work values measured by this instrument.

Educational Significance.

The significance of the study conclusions depends upon one's philosophy of career development. Super (1970) considered understanding the value structure of a client, student, or potential employee to be an important aid in clarifying goals and determining the psychological appropriateness of a given type of training or employment. Knowing the values which motivate an individual and comparing these values with those obtained from various occupations and work settings may form an important basis for counseling. However, when the WVI is used for career counseling or for screening applicants for employment, there are negative implications for groups considered to have been suppressed, e.g., females, blacks and those in the lower social strata. Individuals from these groups may be systematically discriminated against when the results of the WVI are used in counseling. For example, a counselor using scores from the WVI as individual traits which are to be matched for occupational development might tend to counsel black lower social position students into occupations that provide little contact with others. Females might have a higher probability of being matched with occupations of a social service nature and provide an opportunity for creativity. High social position males would most likely be counseled

into jobs that would not necessarily provide a variety of activities.

Blau et al. (1956) suggests that the absence of a proportionate number of black surgeons does not imply that race determines the capacity to develop surgical skills. Rather, it is necessary to determine the intervening processes through which skin color affects occupational position, e.g., societal discrimination and resultant implications for personality development. That is, how does occupational choice develop and what might influence it? Occupational choice develops over a course of several years, during which time many factors influence the course of development. Influential variables would include, among other things, environment, peer groups, the school, as well as the child's relationships to and with these variables. For example, peer groups do much to shape a child's feelings and interpretations about himself, and would thus influence a child's eventual choice of occupation. The school also plays a part in this developmental process. School personnel have traditionally held adult middle class values and have thus caused students holding dissimilar values to be at an academic disadvantage (Ermalenski and Ruscelli, 1971). This disadvantagement has an effect on the choice of a high school curricula which, when decided upon, results in experiences which become part of the development of the individual and his subsequent choices (Blau, et al. 1956). Thus the knowledge of an individual's work values obtained by the counselor or teacher, if these values deviate from those held by the counselor or teacher, may establish an attitude toward the individual that will affect both his academic performance and curriculum choice.

If work values are clearly linked to job satisfaction, then the personnel director is right to determine the work values of prospective employees. However, as concluded by Wood (1971), more research is needed to determine the predictive

validity of work values and other variables on future job satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Wood was able to distinguish between the extremely satisfied engineers and the extremely dissatisfied engineers by employing work values augmented by background data as variables in the discriminant analyses. The results of his analyses were statistically significant.

The point of pursuing the use of work values in counseling and curriculum decisions is not to discredit the use of the WVI as a tool for assisting students in occupational choice, but rather to point out its possible misuse. It is stated frequently that a student has unrealistic aspirations if his values and/or his academic performance are dissimilar to those required for entry into the occupation he wants to pursue. It is rarely observed that the values or academic performance are themselves unrealistic. Educators tend to feel that values are unchangeable while aspirations are easily changed. Perhaps the student should be given the opportunity to change his values rather than his aspirations. A knowledge of what his values are and how these values relate to occupations for which he is best suited would give the student an opportunity to change his values as well as his aspirations.

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